

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 205598

FROM UNA

FOL RPT PRETORIA 4685 SENT ACTION SECSTATE AUG 14, 1978

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 4685

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, SF

SUBJECT: REACTION TO AMBASSADOR'S AUGUST 8 SPEECH

REF: (A) PRETORIA 4596, (B) PRETORIA 4597

1. DFA SECRETARY BRAND FOURIE ON FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, ASKED ME TO SEND HIM A COPY OF MY AUGUST 8 SPEECH (REF B) AS PRIME MINISTER VORSTER WANTED TO LOOK AT IT OVER THE WEEKEND. HE SUGGESTED THAT VORSTER MIGHT WANT HIM TO SAY SOMETHING TO ME ABOUT THE SPEECH BUT DID NOT WANT TO MAKE ANY JUDGMENT ON THE BASIS OF PRESS REPORTS. I SAID I APPRECIATED THIS AND SENT HIM THE TEXT RIGHT AWAY.

2. IN A SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE YESTERDAY, REPORTER FLEUR DE VILLIERS, WHO IS KNOWN FOR HER SPECULATIVE REPORTING SOMETIMES BASED ON BACKGROUND CONTACTS IN THE DFA, WRITES
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THAT A "MAJOR DIPLOMATIC ROW" IS BREWING OVER MY REMARKS, WHICH ARE "UNDERSTOOD" TO BE VIEWED IN SERIOUS LIGHT AT TOP GOVERNMENT LEVEL AND "COULD PRECIPITATE A SERIOUS BREACH BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS." SHE ALSO UNDERSTOOD THAT THE SAG IS ANGERED AND UNLIKELY TO LET THE MATTER REST, AND "IT COULD BE DEALT WITH AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL." SUGGESTING THAT SAG WOULD BE GUIDED BY "WHAT IT BELIEVES

TO BE A GROUNDSWELL OF RESENTMENT AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH THE ATTITUDE AND PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION," MISS DE VILLIERS NOTES THAT VARIOUS OPTIONS RANGE FROM AN ORAL REBUKE BY DFA SECRETARY FOURIE UP TO STIFF PROTEST NOTE REQUESTING MY RECALL (WHICH SHE SPECULATES WOULD AS LIKELY LEAD TO AN INEVITABLE RECIPROCAL REQUEST FOR AMBASSADOR SOLE'S RECALL FROM WASHINGTON), THEN SUGGESTS THE SAG MIGHT OPT FOR AN UNCONVENTIONAL INFORMAL LETTER FROM FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA TO SECRETARY VANCE EXPRESSING SAG ANNOYANCE.

3. I HAVE YET TO HEAR AGAIN FROM FOURIE. MEANWHILE, I HAD A VERY PLEASANT HALF HOUR TALK WITH PLURAL RELATIONS MINISTER CONNIE MULDER, DURING WHICH HIS ONLY COMMENT ABOUT SPEECH WAS TO THE EFFECT THAT HE PAID LITTLE ATTENTION TO WHAT THE PRESS REPORTED OF SUCH MATTERS, GIVEN HIS OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THE PRESS. ANOTHER MINISTER AND OFFICIALS I SAW FRIDAY EVENING WERE EQUALLY FRIENDLY AND SEEMINGLY UNAFFECTED BY MY REMARKS.

4. JOHANNESBURG STAR EDITOR HARVEY TYSON COMMENTED PRIVATELY HOWEVER THAT I OBVIOUSLY HIT UPON A SORE NERVE WITHING NATIONAL PARTY ITSELF WHEN I TOUCHED UPON THE DANGERS OF A POLICY THAT AIMS AT AN ULTIMATE SITUATION OF HAVING NO BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS. IT IS NOW BECOMING CLEAR THAT VERLIGTES WITHIN THE NATIONAL PARTY MAY THEMSELVES

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BE QUESTIONING THE WISDOM OF THIS "LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE" OF APARTHEID THEORY. IF SO, VORSTER MAY FEEL MUCH LESS TOLERANT ABOUT HEARING SUCH TRUTHS FROM FOREIGN DIPLOMATS. EDMONDSON

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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